In their country there

524 are big nasty yellow-brown hornets (a kind of Belonogaster)
136 which build more or less circular nests, sometimes attaining to the size of a man's head. On a certain day the boys decide to make war on these enemies. They make shields with the leaves of the *pala* palm tree which they plait together.

524 They cut down branches, which they wave to protect themselves, and one of them goes and strikes a heavy blow on the wasps' nest! The irritated insects rush out on their assailants and sting them. The boys try to kill the wasps with their sticks or to crush them when they light on them. Sometimes, overcome by the pain, they run away; sometimes, resisting to the last, they kill and exterminate their winged enemies.

Besides this there are also *big battles between the shepherds* of the different flocks. The shepherds amuse themselves by taking one another's cattle. Those who are the strongest bring the stolen herd triumphantly back to the neighbourhood of their village, but they would never let it enter the kraal. The vanquished call to their help their elder brothers, who come to recover their property and, if they can, give the thieves a sound thrashing!

578 Insults and fights are frequent between the clans. The boys
162 of Mpfumu call out to those of Matjolo: " Forest gadders! Eaters
291 of snails and boas, of lizards and tortoises " (all of which are questionable food!) (In Ronga: Balala! Badi ba tihumba ni tinhlaru ni makhwahle ni tinfutchu). Those of Matjolo answer them: " Crowd of women that you are, clad in cotton material! " (Babasati! Matchimbamphela!), in reference to the fact that the inhabitants of Mpfumu, living near the town, some time ago replaced the belt of skins worn by the savages by a piece of cotton tied to the waist and hanging down to the knee (ladula).

855 The custom of frightening children with imaginary beasts is
857 wide spread amongst the Thongas. The bogey man is called
538 *Shingomu-Ngomu* or else *Shikunkunumu*, and by this very expressive
361 word they designate a huge and mighty being who walks, swaying his big body from right to left, with a sound like *ngomu-ngomu*. The ogre is *Shitukulumukumba*, a word coming originally from the Zulus, which corresponds to the Ronga *Ñwambilutimhokora*, that is to say: " the one who has scales on the heart. " He eats

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

855/538 human beings. These imaginary creatures play a large part in the native tales, especially the one who " has scales on the heart. " He feeds on vermin, lice and big white beetle larvae, which are his almonds (1).

855 When a child cries and cannot be comforted, someone goes and hides behind the hut and slaps his neck saying: "U-u-u," while

[524]

Boys trying to play Billiards
at Magaila's, near Antioka Station.

those remaining with the lamenting little one say to him: " Be quiet, listen! Shikunkununu is coming! "

857 There are also the *timbelembele*, a kind of terrible wasp which only exists in the imagination of children. When a boy does not dare to follow his companions up a tree which they have climbed, they shout to him: " Make haste! Here are the timbelembele coming to bite you! " And he is so frightened that he at once finds strength to climb.

(1) We shall given complete ogre tale in Part V.

302 used to shave their beards). Young men sometimes let two or three of their curls grow on their forehead like horns! Others stretch out their curls and smear them with a gluey substance obtained from the nkanye tree. This is called *ku hoba misisi*.
302 As regards women, those who are nursing babies regularly
853 turn their hair into an ornament: the small curls are stretched out, smeared with fat and made to fall on the temples and on the occiput; they are then covered with ochre. This operation is called *ku hora misisi*, and the rats'tails thus produced are the *tingoya*; they are the characteristic ornament of women during the nursing period. Nursing women undoubtedly think the tingoya improve their appearance. "Look! She has *hora misisi*! How well it suits her!" people will say of a woman who has succeeded in altering her coiffure in this way. But this custom has also a ritual value (1).

Nursing women cover their whole body, their clothing, and their *ntehe* (I. p. 46) with *ochre*. The habit of anointing (tota) or smearing with ochre (tshumane) goes hand in hand with that of tingoya. This rather disgusting custom marks them as nursing, and is a protection (shisibelo) against the husband; so long as a woman covers herself with ochre, it is a sign that she will not
302 cohabit with him. They say also that ochre prevents the bad
●855 smell resulting from childrens' unclean habits, and that it softens the ntehe and makes the baby grow (2). The skin of children is also covered with a coating of this pigment; some say it is done not so much with the object of beautifying the child as of hiding the dirt which the mothers are too lazy to remove! No wonder that, in these conditions, it has been found that this smearing with ochre fosters conjunctivitis and other diseases!

177 (1) The Ngoni taught the Northern Thongas another and more elaborate way of
302 curling the hair: the queens, wives of Gungunyana, transform their "thatch" into regular cylindrical chignons (shifoko), standing up like towers (I. p. 416). The Ba-Ronga have not adopted this custom, except, in some cases, the chiefs. (I. p. 386).

(2) It is very curious to observe that these two feminine modes of adornment, the tingoya and the ochre, have been adopted by the magicians, those who pretend to possess supernatural power in smelling out witches and treating possessed people (Part VI). They like to assume the appearance of women. People suffering from the Ba-Ndjao possession especially use ochre. Their spirits order them to do so: they would torment their victims should the latter not obey.

1 [i.e., spirit--analyst]